

VI. *A Species of subterraneous Fire, observ'd in the same County ; communicated in a Letter to Dr. Jurin, by Robert Nesbitt, M.D. Coll. Med. Lond. Lic.*

S I R,

I Here send, as you desired, the best Account I can of a Species of *subterraneous Fire*, which was first taken notice of on the second of *August* last, in a *Marshy-Field* situated in the Parish of *Flinx-Hill*, about ten or twelve Miles South West of *Canterbury* in the County of *Kent*.

This Fire began on the side of a little Brook near the Water, and continu'd to burn along its Bank, without spreading much for some Days. Afterwards it appeared on the other side, and extended it self the space of some Acres over the Field, consuming all the Earth, where it burnt, into red Ashes quite down to the Springs; which in most places lay four Feet or more deep. On the twenty fourth of *September* I went to see it, and found it had consumed, as well as I cou'd guess by my Eye, about three Acres of Ground.

It then burnt in many Places, and sent forth a great Smoak and strong Smell, very like to that of a Brick-Kiln. It never flamed but when the Earth was turn'd and stirred. For some space round where it was burning, the Ground felt hot, tho' the Grass seem'd no more parch'd than might reasonably be expected from the Dryness and Heat of the Season. I caus'd it to be turn'd up in several Places, and found the Earth hot
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and wet near four Feet deep, and much hotter about two feet than near the Surface.

When this Earth was exposed to the Air, tho' it was very moist and not hotter than you might easily bear with your Hand, the Heat increas'd so fast, that in a few Minutes it was all over on Fire, like *Phosphorus* made with *Allom* and *Flower*.

The Soil of the Field is of the same nature with that they make the *Turf* of in *Holland*; the Surface of it is always wet, except in extream dry Seasons. This Year it was somewhat more parched and harder than usual.

I believe, from what has been related, it is not more difficult to account for this Fire, than for those Fires which often happen in *Hay-ricks* when Hay is stacked before it is thoroughly made.

P. S. I send you a Piece of the Earth, and some of the Ashes. I should have mentioned, that I took several Pieces of the Earth, before I was able to bring one away, because of its firing; one Piece, in particular, I gave to my Servant, which firing in his Pocket, had almost burnt its way out before it was perceived.

I am, &c.

VI. *An*